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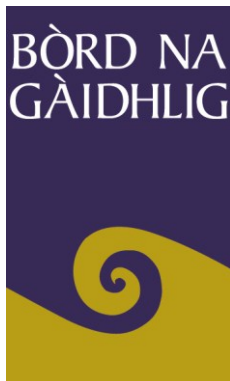
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The University of Edinburgh Gaelic Language Plan: Questionnaire Report

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May 2012



THE UNIVERSITY
of EDINBURGH

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1 Introduction

This report provides a summary and analysis of the results of a survey of students and staff at the University of Edinburgh, carried out in order to investigate existing Gaelic language competencies and opportunities for the development of increased acquisition, usage and status of Gaelic within the University. This research was commissioned by the University of Edinburgh Gaelic Language Plan Working Group and was funded by the University of Edinburgh and by Bòrd na Gàidhlig, the non-departmental public body established by the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005 to support Gaelic and to improve its status in Scotland.

In April 2011, the University of Edinburgh was asked by Bòrd na Gàidhlig to prepare a Gaelic Language Plan. To guide this process, the University of Edinburgh Gaelic Language Plan Working Group was established in August 2011, chaired by Frank Gribben, Registrar of the College of Humanities and Social Science.

The University of Edinburgh is one of four higher education institutions currently preparing a Gaelic Language Plan, the others being the University of Aberdeen, the University of Glasgow and the University of Strathclyde. The UHI Millennium Institute (now the University of the Highlands and Islands) submitted a Gaelic Language Plan in 2009.

The University's Plan will aim to raise the profile of Gaelic and create practical opportunities for its use. It will address four core commitments identified by the Bòrd (identity, communications, publications and staffing) and set out how the University will help implement the National Plan for Gaelic. The University is due to submit its plan to Bòrd na Gàidhlig by the end of July 2012.

The main purpose of this survey was to inform the University's Plan, by assessing:

- Gaelic language ability and use;
- Interest in Gaelic learning opportunities;
- Interest in Gaelic cultural events;
- Awareness and perceived importance of Gaelic.

Questions were also asked about other initiatives in which the University could engage in order to support and increase the use of Gaelic, in addition to educational and cultural activities. The content and structure of the questionnaire were partly based on the survey previously carried out at the University of Glasgow (Cotter, Dunn and Ó Maolalaigh 2010) and on guidance produced by Timothy Armstrong (2010) of Sabhal Mòr Ostaig on effective organisational language auditing. A draft of the questionnaire was trialled by members of the University of Edinburgh Gaelic Language Plan Working Group, and feedback from this trial and evaluation was incorporated in the final version.

The survey was conducted as an online questionnaire (published in both English and Gaelic editions), with responses collected between 14 March and 6 April 2012. It was announced through bilingual email messages to all staff and students and was also publicised through the University's social media presence on Facebook and Twitter and through the Staff News webpage. Participation in the survey was entirely voluntary and did not involve formal sampling, so its results should be understood as being indicative rather than statistically representative of the University population.

2 Key findings

1,853 individuals responded to the survey, representing approximately 4.9% of the University's total number of students and staff. **All Schools and all staff groups** were represented (see section 3). Considerable interest was also generated on the University's Facebook page (see section 10).

67.4% in total, or 70.2% of student respondents, rate supporting and promoting Gaelic as 'very important' or 'quite important' (see section 4.2). The most common factor contributing to respondents' interest in Gaelic is **'general interest in the language'**, followed by **'history and place-names'** (see section 4.4).

There is an apparent **lack of awareness of the policy context** within which the University's Gaelic Language Plan is being developed, and a **lack of awareness of the role of Gaelic in the City and at the University** (see section 4.1 and section 9).

352 respondents (19.0%) claimed to have some 'ability' in Gaelic, 29.5% of whom have a national identity from outside the UK (see section 5.1).

71.8% of those with Gaelic ability lack confidence to use it, often or at all (see section 5.3).

1,116 respondents (60.2%) were either **currently taking a Gaelic course or would like to/might be interested in learning Gaelic** (see section 6.1).

A high proportion of international respondents were either currently taking a course or would like to/might be interested in learning Gaelic, including **83.3% of Polish respondents, 80.0% of Greek respondents, 79.5% of US respondents and 76.9% of Chinese respondents** (see section 6.1).

Most current or potential learners would initially be aiming at **courses for complete beginners**. 123 respondents would like to acquire the **skills to teach Gaelic to others** (see section 6.2).

The most popular course delivery methods are, for students, **two-hour evening classes** (6.30pm-8.30pm) and, for staff, **weekday lunchtime classes** (see section 6.3).

The most popular ideas for cultural events were jointly **cèilidhs** and **music concerts**, followed by educational sessions about Gaelic folklore, information sessions on Gaelic history and culture and educational sessions about Gaelic place-names (see section 7.1). It is important to note that *cèilidh* signifies different things in English and Gaelic usage (see section 7.2).

Apart from educational and cultural activities, the other initiative that is most favoured is **'increased visibility of Gaelic in public spaces (e.g. corporate/visual identity, signs, stationery)'**, with 50.4% of all respondents, and 56.7% of students favouring this. Support is especially strong among students in certain Schools, such as (in HSS) **ECA, LLC, PPLS and Moray House School of Education** (see section 8.1).

3 Respondent profile

3.1 Overall number of responses

The University of Edinburgh has over 30,300 matriculated students and over 7,800 staff.¹ Out of these approximately 38,100 potential respondents, 1,853 survey responses were received (1,815 responses to the English-language version of the questionnaire and 38 to the Gaelic-language version). This represents an approximate response rate of 4.9%.

3.2 Gender

1,114 (60.1%) of the respondents were female, 733 (39.6%) male and 6 (0.3%) transgender (see figure 1).

3.3 Age groups

The respondents represented a wide variety of age groups (see figure 2). The majority (60.9%) were aged under 30, with the largest group (28.7%) aged 21-25.

3.4 Staff/student profile

1,128 (60.9%) of the respondents were students, and 725 (39.1%) were members of staff (see figure 3).

Among student respondents, all Schools were represented (see figure 4). The biggest student response came from the School of Literatures, Languages and Cultures, with 198 respondents (17.6% of the total number of student responses). This group was followed by three other Schools in the College of Humanities and Social Science (HSS), namely the School of History, Classics and Archaeology (94 respondents; 8.3%), the School of Philosophy, Psychology and Language Sciences (88 respondents; 7.8%) and the School of Social and Political Science (85 respondents; 7.5%). The largest response from outwith HSS came from the School of GeoSciences (71 respondents; 6.3%).

Of the students, 771 (68.4% of the student respondents) were undergraduates, 150 (13.3%) were taught postgraduates, and 207 (18.4%) were research postgraduates.

All staff groups were also represented in the survey. 307 respondents (42.3% of the staff respondents) were members of academic staff and 418 (57.7%) worked in administrative, technical or operational services. A breakdown of the different parts of the University in which these staff members work is provided in figure 5.

¹ Student numbers as of 31 January 2012 (University of Edinburgh Governance and Strategic Planning 2012). Staff numbers as of 31 July 2011 (University of Edinburgh Governance and Strategic Planning 2011).

3.5 National identity

The majority of respondents claimed a national identity within the UK (1418; 76.5%), most of whom selected 'Scotland' to represent their national identity (746; 40.3% of all respondents), followed by those who selected 'United Kingdom' (516; 27.8% of all respondents). Many people identify with more than one national identity, and most of the 35 respondents who selected 'Other' did so to express dual identity. Others used that category to specify identities not otherwise listed in the list, such as European, Hong Kong, Manx, Cornish or 'Citizen of the world'.

There were a large number of international respondents representing every continent and over 50 different countries. After 'Scotland' and 'United Kingdom', the largest groups with at least 10 respondents each were England, the USA, Ireland, Germany, 'Other', Northern Ireland, Poland, Canada, France, Wales, China and Greece.

Figure 1: What is your gender?

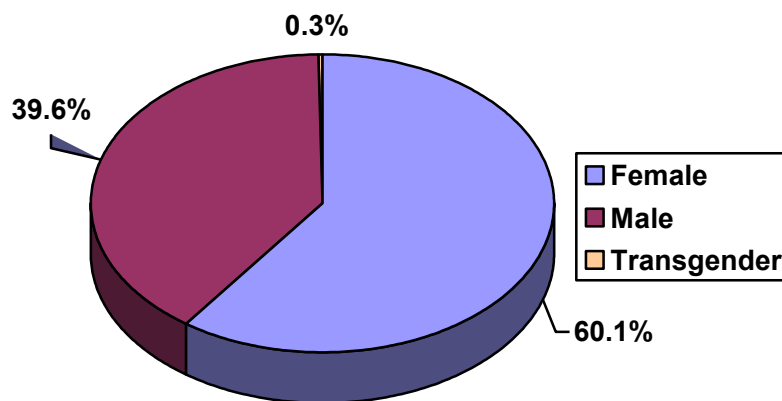


Figure 2: What is your age group?

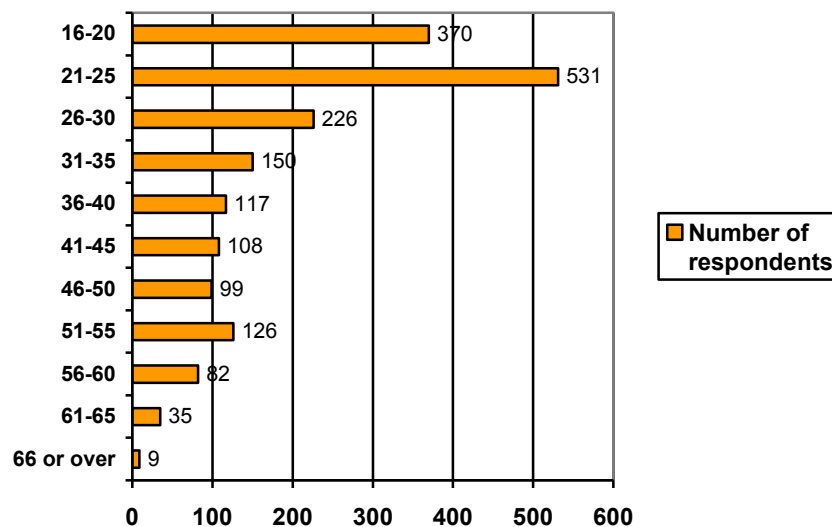


Figure 3: What is your primary role at the University of Edinburgh?

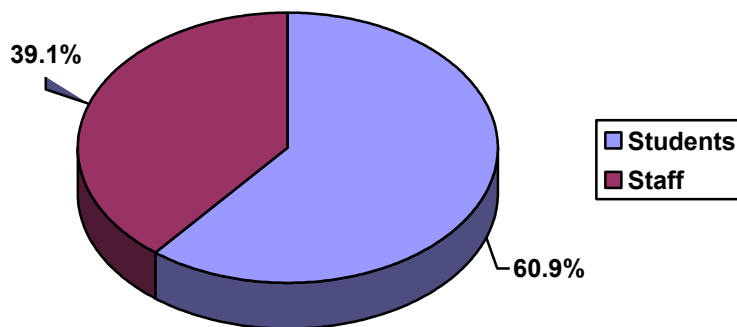


Figure 4: In which School do you mainly study? (Student respondents only).

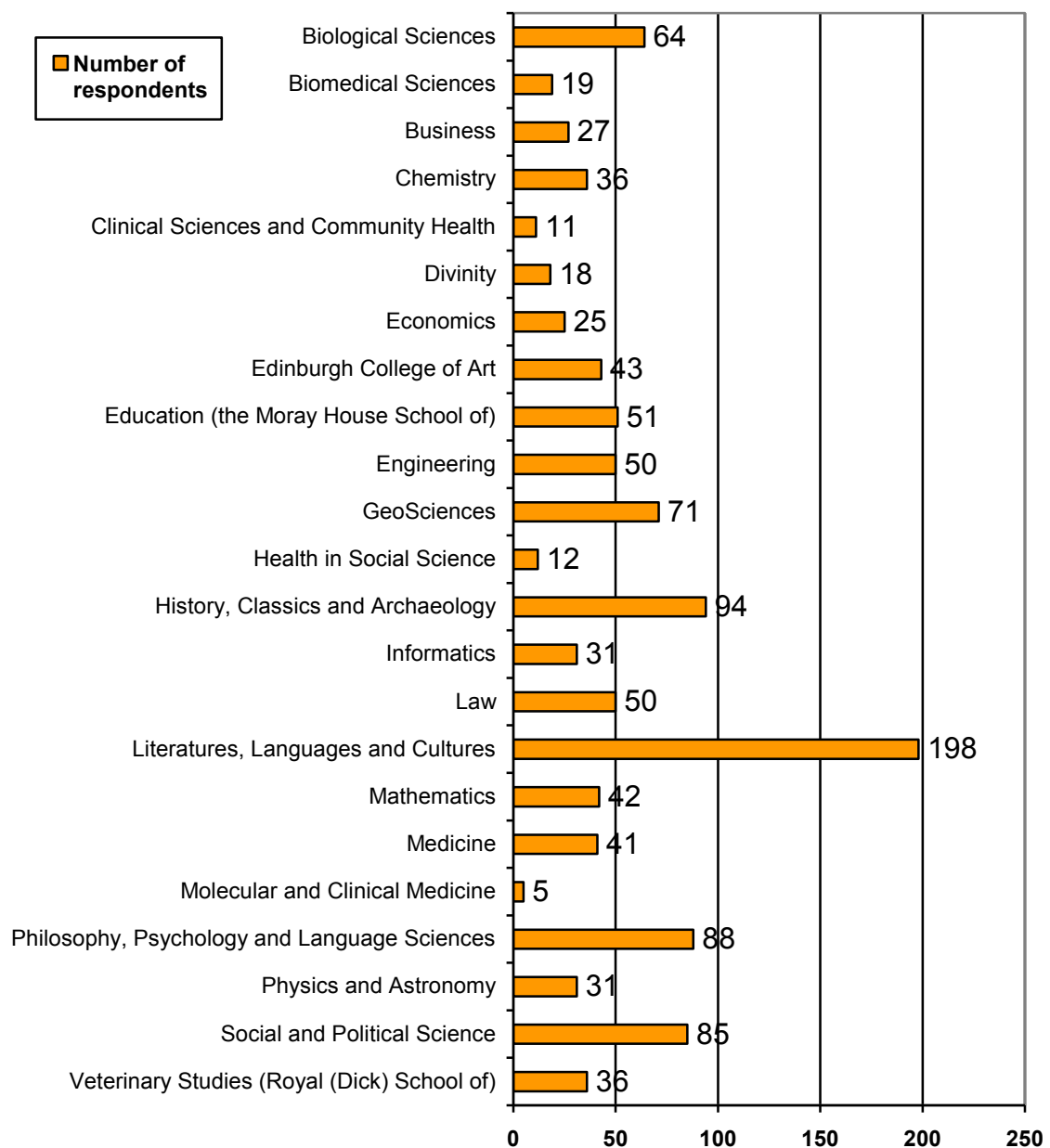


Figure 5: In which part of the University do you mainly work? (Staff respondents only).

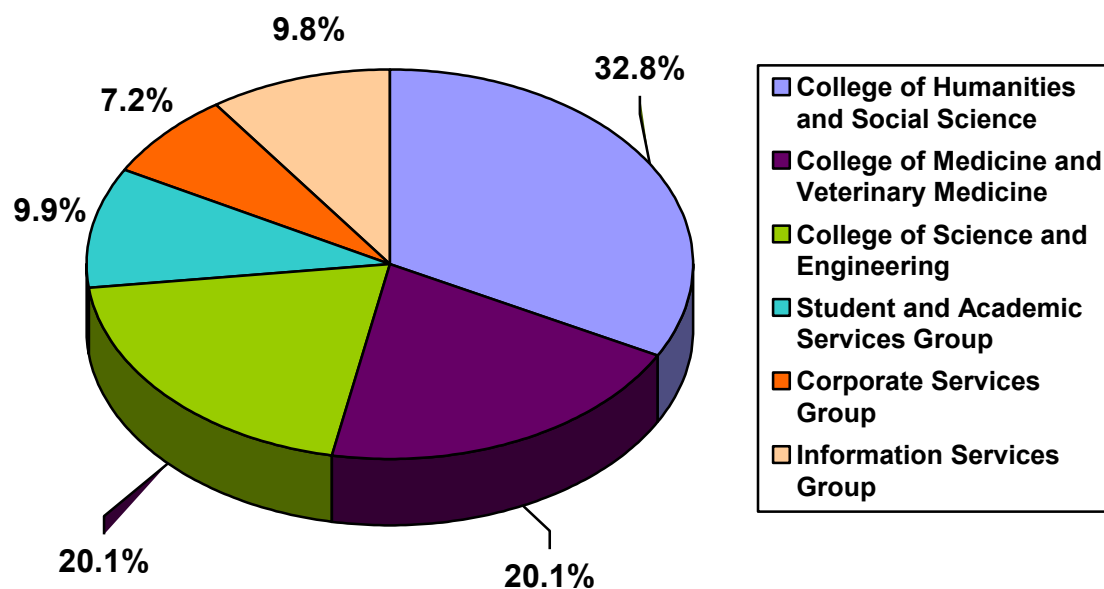


Figure 6: National identity of respondents, grouped by region/continent.

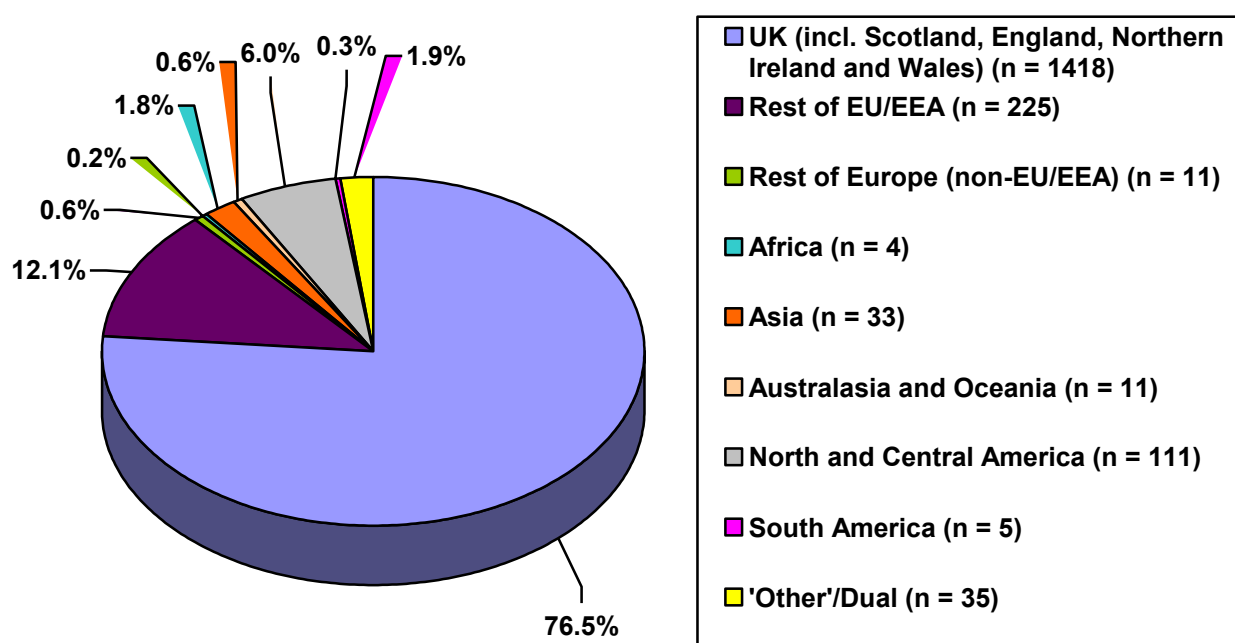
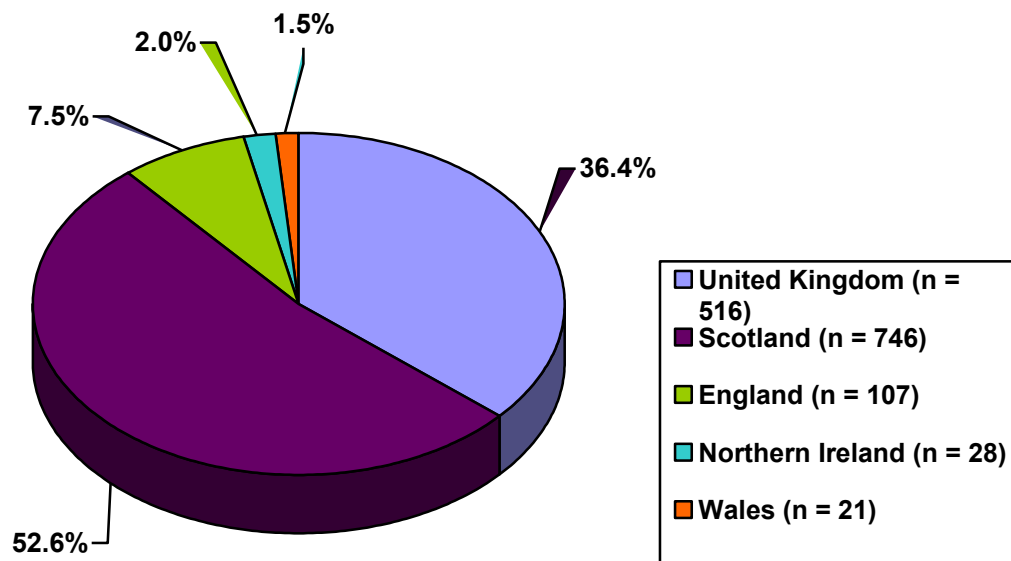


Figure 7: National identity by country, as given (UK respondents only).



4 Awareness and perceived importance of Gaelic

4.1 Perceived importance of Gaelic to the cultural life of Scotland

1,151 respondents (62.1%) described Gaelic as 'quite important' or 'very important' to the cultural life of Scotland (see figure 8). A variety of comments were received on the importance of Gaelic to Scottish culture, including the following:

'It depends on what you mean by Gaelic – if you are purely talking about the language then this answer would be “not at all important” but if you are talking about the culture, then it would be closer to “very important”'

'Scots is equally important.'

'PART of Scotland (pls don't let enthusaism [sic] for Gaelic stamp on other languages and dialects from other parts of Scotland – the Gaels were never the whole story (especially not here in the Lothians – our Brythonic place names are very homesy for a Welshman!).'

'Despite living in Scotland all my life I have hardly encountered Gaelic but I think it probably contributes a lot to Scottish culture for those lucky enough to experienc [sic] it. It would be a loss to have it die out before Scotland has a chance to find out what it has.'

'It has important regional historical roots that should be preserved but should not be turned into a blanket national political pawn.'

While the sample as a whole is positively disposed towards Gaelic's role in the culture of Scotland, many of those surveyed had reservations about the role of Gaelic in the Central Belt or in Edinburgh in particular. Awareness of the part that Gaelic has played in the complex cultural and linguistic history of this area of Scotland appears important to understand the relevance of Gaelic to the City and to the University.

A large number of respondents also expressed the opinion that promoting Gaelic as a language of all of Scotland appears to be a nationalist political project connected to the current Scottish Government, but it is important to note that the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005 was passed on 21 April 2005, under a former coalition administration, with the unanimous support of the Scottish Parliament. The Act aims to secure 'the status of the Gaelic language as an official language of Scotland commanding equal respect to the English language'. It would be useful to raise awareness of the legislation behind Gaelic Language Plans and of the fact that the University is not the only institution producing one. This was expanded upon by respondents, for example in this comment:

'Be careful to open awareness to the legislation which requires [sic] Gaelic Language Plans – there is the potential that, to many, activity in this sphere [sic] may appear to have “come from nowhere” and therefore has the potential to arouse hostility.'

4.2 Perceived importance of supporting and promoting Gaelic

1,249 respondents (67.4% of the total sample) rated supporting and promoting Gaelic as 'very important' or 'quite important'. The figure is highest among students, with 792 (70.2% of the student sample) perceiving the support and promotion of Gaelic as 'very important' or 'quite important' (see figure 9). Again a variety of comments were fielded on the importance of the language's support and promotion, a sample of which are given below:

'Coming from Wales, I recognise the importance of promoting minority languages for the culture and identity of the country.'

'Not convinced that promotion of Gaelic is a proper use of public funds. There are far bigger challenges for Scotland than supporting a language that is spoken by relatively few and is restricted to specific areas.'

'It is sad to see how little it is promoted (and lack of teaching in schools). Back home (Ireland) you do see Irish everywhere, even if people don't use it much, so there is some sort of immersion.'

'Incredibly important if Edinburgh wishes to maintain its status as the most prestigious university in Scotland'

'I would rather say I am ambivalent – I am aware it is important to many, but not to me'

'I think it's important to try and keep Gaelic alive and I feel that whilst growing up I haven't been introduced to it at all which is wrong I feel. I think it's an important part of Scotland's history and culture.'

'Tha e ann an lagh (Achd 2005)!' [It's the law (the 2005 Act)!]

'I have worked a lot in Africa and appreciate the beauty, and understanding that can be gained from, minority languages – for example giving a deeper cultural understanding. I also speak many European languages and feel that Gaelic is something that is a skill I'd really like to gain'

'I think it more important that, for example, all children in Scotland leave compulsory education able to read and write English (and be numerically literate).'

'only if available to all not just an elite few!'

4.3 Personal awareness of Gaelic

964 (52.0%) of the respondents claimed to be 'quite aware' or 'very aware' of the status of the Gaelic language in Scotland (see figure 10). Student respondents were slightly less aware, with 572 of them (50.7% of the student sample) describing themselves as 'not very aware' or 'not at all aware'.

4.4 Factors contributing to personal interest in Gaelic

Replying to an optional question, those who are interested in Gaelic cited 'general interest in the language' as the most common factor contributing to their interest, followed by 'history and place-names' (see figure 11). 'Music', 'literature' and 'family' were also common factors. Among the many 'other' factors were the following:

'An interest in the world and cultures.'

'Appeal of the cultural uniqueness to an international student'

'As an international relations major, I believe it is important to immerse myself in as many different cultures as possible.'

'Awareness of grand-parents being beaten at School for speaking Gaelic.'

'cultural heritage of the place where I study'

'Eòlas na Gàidhlig san fharsaingeachd aig ìre coimhearsnachdan na Gàidhealtachd (far a bheil i ga bruidhinn mar chanain ionadail) ann an Alba agus ann an Canada' [Studies of Gaelic in general at the community level in the Gàidhealtachd (where it is spoken as a local language) in Scotland and in Canada]

'Friends'

'Generally interested in languages (not Gaelic specific [sic])'

'Heritage'

'I have to catalogue Gaelic publications, and I would like to understand the language better'

'I'm in Scotland; how could I NOT be interested?'

'Interested in lots of languages, especially minority languages, because language preserves more than just identity, it helps to articulate thoughts, and languages that are different do this in different ways.'

'It is essential to my academic research'

'My faimly [sic] was originally Gaelic-speaking when they came to Australia.'

'Planned PhD on Minority Language development.'

'part of the history & culture of Atlantic Canada'

'the politics of it, and getting a sense of place'

'TBh' [TV]

'Through my own music I meet quite a lot of foreigners and I would like to give them some insight into the Gaelic language as they are often very interested.'

'We are interested in having our children educated through Gaelic and I would like to be able to help them with their homework and converse with them in Gaelic'

'Work with so-called "peripheral" communities and knowledge transfer as part of academic vocation.'

'Working on the Carmichael Watson project.'

Figure 8: How would you describe the importance of Gaelic to the cultural life of Scotland?

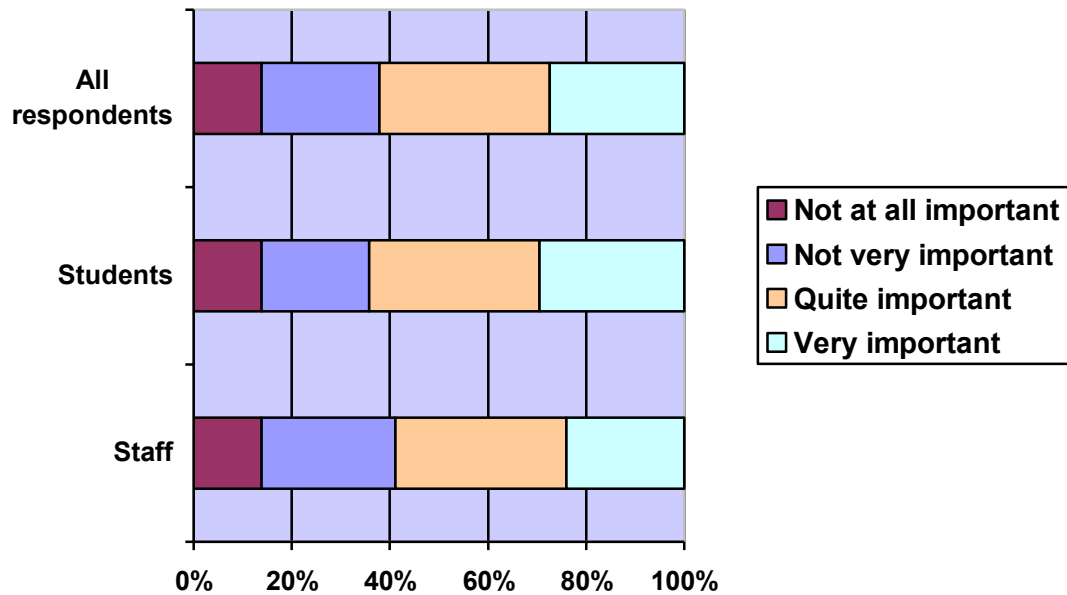


Figure 9: How would you describe the importance of supporting and promoting Gaelic?

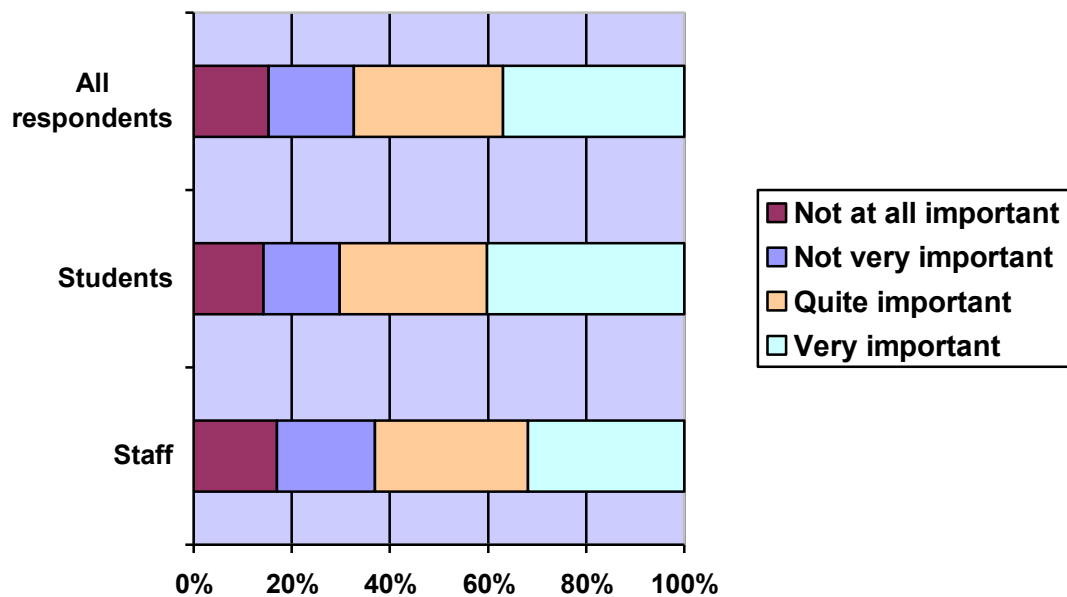


Figure 10: How would you describe your own personal awareness of the status of the Gaelic language in Scotland?

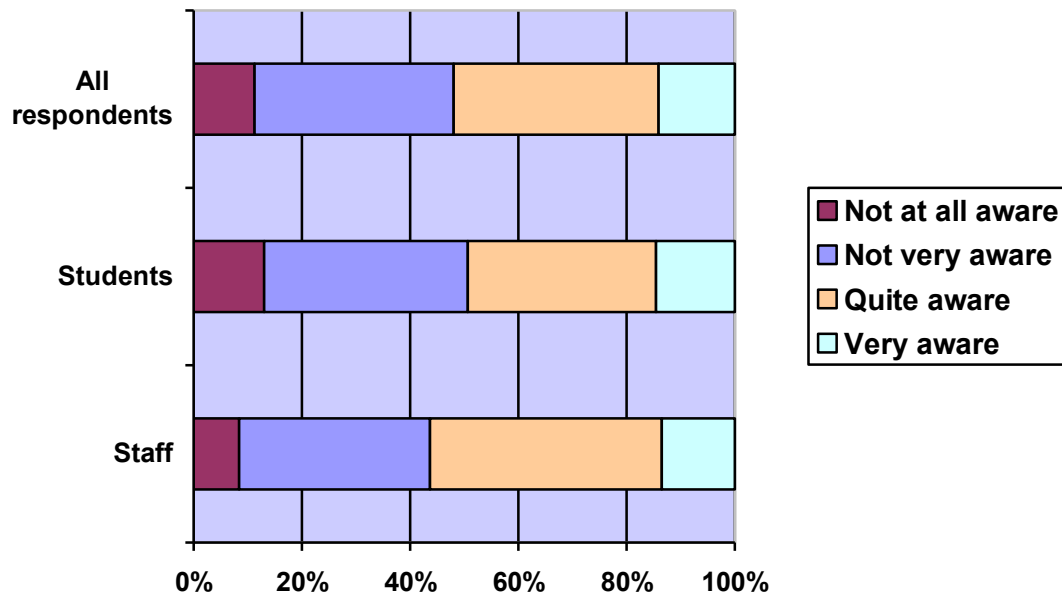
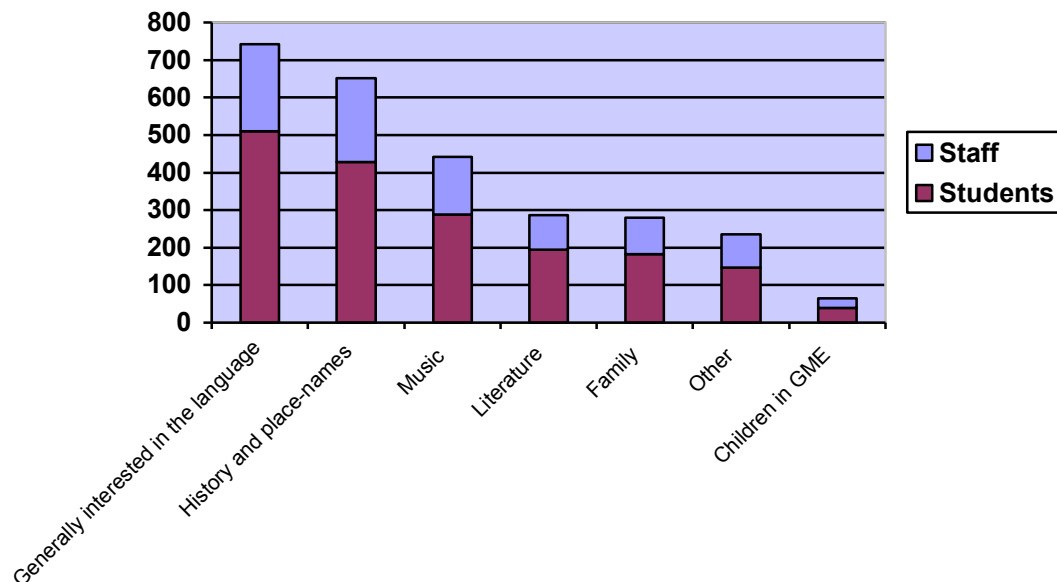


Figure 11: If you are interested in Gaelic, what are the main factors contributing to your attraction to Gaelic? (Optional question, multiple responses accepted).



5 Gaelic language ability and use

5.1 Profile of those with Gaelic ability

352 respondents (19.0% of the total sample) claimed to have some 'ability' in Gaelic (see figure 12). The profile of this group broadly corresponds to the general profile of the total sample population, with a gender composition of 57.4% female, 41.8% male and 0.9% transgender (compared to the total population's composition of 60.1% female, 39.6% male and 0.3% transgender). 65.1% of this group were students, and 34.9% were staff (compared to the total population's 60.9% students and 39.1% staff). Ability in Gaelic can be found across all Schools in the University and all staff groups.

In terms of national identity, non-UK nations accounted for 29.5% of those with some Gaelic ability, as opposed to 23.5% of the whole sample population (see figures 6 and 13). The University's multinational community is therefore more broadly represented among those with Gaelic ability, which also provides evidence of the international interest in Gaelic.

5.2 Levels of ability

49 individuals among those surveyed (13.9% of those with some ability in Gaelic, or 2.6% of the total sample) were native speakers, including native speakers who only use Gaelic occasionally. 226 respondents (64.2% of those with some ability) described themselves as learners (see figure 14). A large number (87 respondents; 24.7% of those with some ability in Gaelic) selected 'Other' to describe their ability. Representative responses reveal that this category covers a broad range of levels, from knowing a few words to previously fluent speakers, and encompassing speakers of related Celtic languages:

'A word or two'

'I can only count to ten!'

'I have very little knowledge, but know the odd phrase or two. My name is Gaelic'

'I can read the signs in the train station'

'Can pronounce and translate names of mountains'

'It is my father's first language and some of my siblings have learned so I have picked up some bits'

'Learned Manx at school when young'

'Speak Irish fluently, have some understanding of written and spoken Gaelic, as the languages are very similar'

'Previously fluent speaker, now rare/never user.'

193 (85.4%) of those who classified themselves as learners were non-fluent Gaelic learners, while 33 (14.6%) were fluent learners, including fluent learners who only use Gaelic occasionally. Almost half of learners had studied Gaelic for one year or less, while almost a quarter had studied the language for five years or more (see figure 15).

5.3 Confidence when using Gaelic

49.4% of those with some ability 'have some Gaelic but lack the confidence to use it at all', while an additional 22.4% 'have some Gaelic but often lack the confidence to use it'. The lack of confidence, or the tendency to default to English, is demonstrated by the fact that only 12 (24.5%) of the native speakers surveyed chose to respond to the Gaelic-language version of the questionnaire. This lack of confidence when using Gaelic reflects a need for learning opportunities and for steps towards improving the status of Gaelic.

Figure 12: Thinking about your current knowledge of Gaelic, do you have any ability (at any level) in understanding, speaking, reading or writing Gaelic?

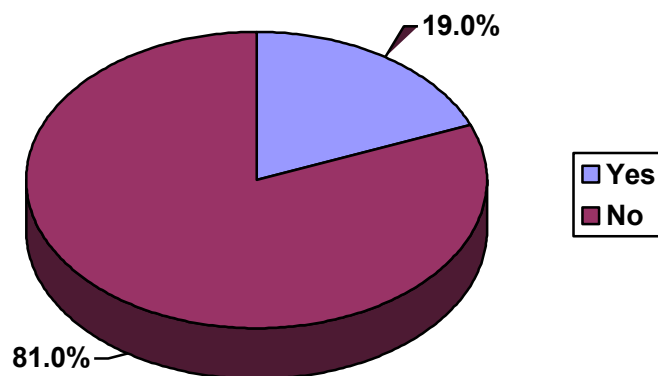


Figure 13: National identity of those with some ability in Gaelic, grouped by region/continent.

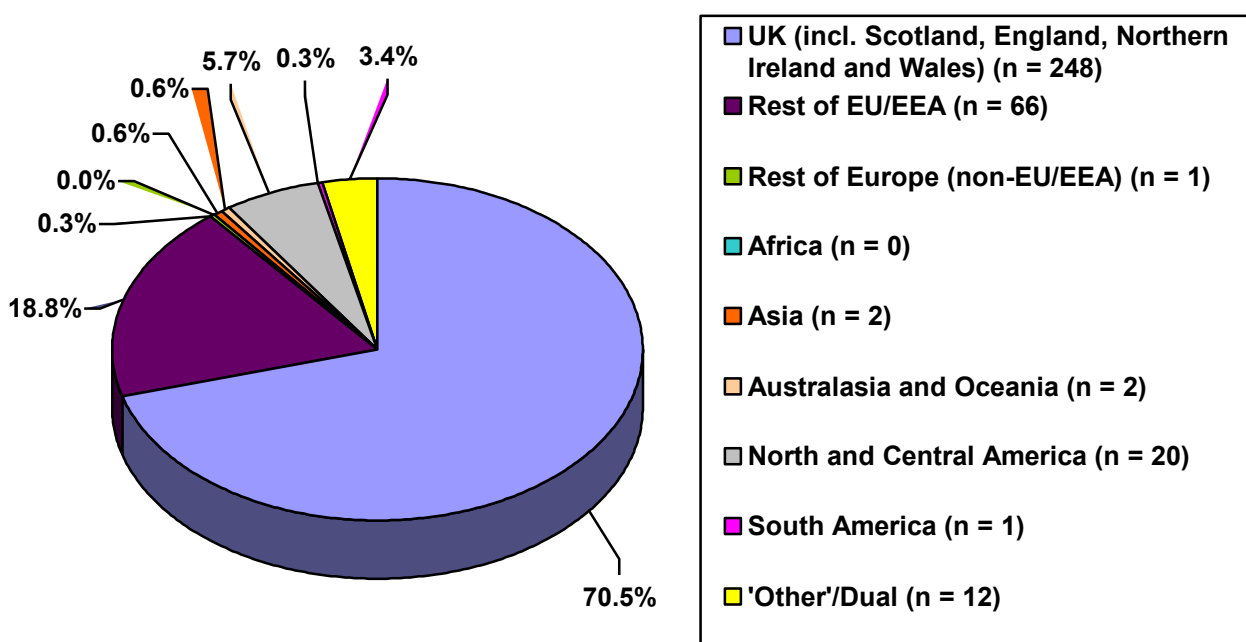


Figure 14: Which of these statements best describes your current Gaelic ability and use? (Only respondents who claim an ability in Gaelic).

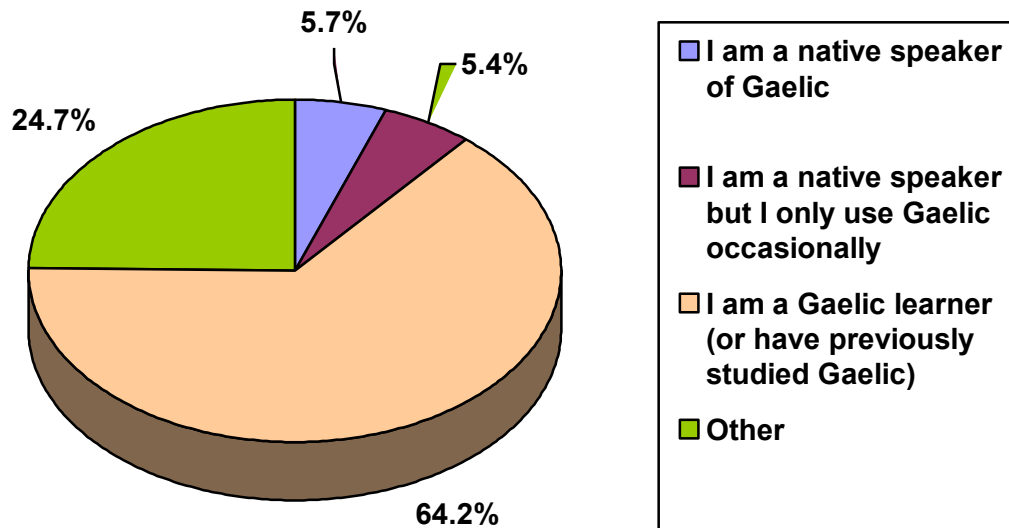
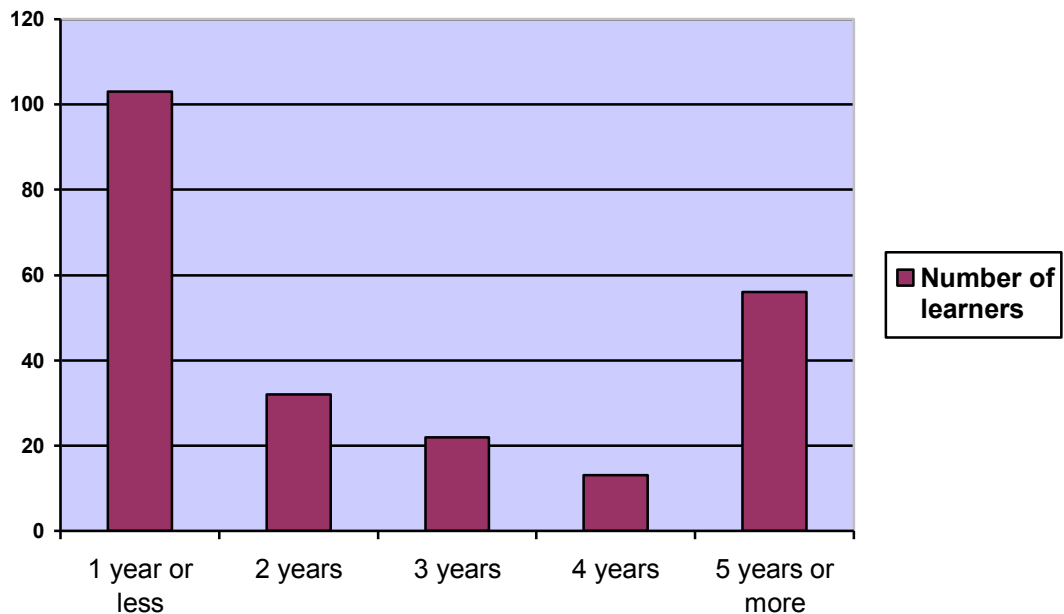


Figure 15: How many years in total have you been studying Gaelic? If you have previously studied Gaelic, how many years did you study Gaelic? (Only Gaelic learners).



6 Gaelic learning opportunities

6.1 Interest in learning Gaelic

1,116 respondents (60.2%) were either currently taking a Gaelic course or would like to/might be interested in taking Gaelic courses (see figure 16). This group was composed of 65.3% female, 34.5% male and 0.2% transgender respondents. 738 (66.1%) of respondents in this group were students and 378 (33.9%) were staff. Interest was expressed across all Schools in the University and all staff groups.

Of this group of 1,116 respondents, 323 (28.9%) had a national identity from outside the UK or its constituent nations. Demonstrating the broad international interest in Gaelic, interest in courses included nationals of the following non-UK countries:

Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, China, Costa Rica, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, India, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Lebanon, Lithuania, Malaysia, Mauritius, Mexico, Montenegro, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Singapore, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Taiwan, Uganda, Ukraine, United States of America, and Venezuela.

Of the largest national contingents represented in the survey (as identified in section 3.5 above), interest in learning Gaelic is strongest among those from Poland (83.3%), Greece (80.0%), the USA (79.5%) and China (76.9%) (see figure 17). Among respondents from the UK, interest is strongest among those identifying themselves with Wales (71.4%) followed by Scotland (65.0%).

'I just think learninig [sic] Gaelic to begin with should be a big deal. It should be something that goes into your prospectus – something that's impressed on in Open Days, just as you would like to learn Italian to study at an Italian university, people will probably really like to say they learnt Gaelic to study in Scotland.'

6.2 Levels and content of Gaelic courses required

Most respondents among the current or potential learners of Gaelic would initially be aiming at classes for complete beginners (see figure 18). In addition to the higher levels suggested, some other proposals were made by respondents for specialised courses or learning resources, for example:

'Gaelic article & short story discussion group'

'Maybe gaelic [sic] for hillwalkers to explain some of the place and hill names on maps'

Among the taught skills that might be most useful to Gaelic learners or to those who wish to improve their Gaelic, the most popular option is 'to learn a few greetings and simple phrases', selected by 709 (63.5%) of current or potential learners. Learning 'to read and write in Gaelic' is the second most popular option, selected by 593 (53.1%) in this group. 'Spoken fluency in the language' is the third aim for this group, selected by 572 (51.3%) of current or potential learners. 123 respondents would like to acquire the skills to teach Gaelic to others.

6.3 Options for course delivery

The most popular option for delivery of classes is two-hour weekday evening slots (6.30-8.30pm) (see figure 19), selected by 412 respondents (35.8% of those who expressed a preference). This is followed by weekday lunchtimes, chosen by 269 respondents (23.4% of those who expressed a preference). Among staff members, weekday lunchtimes were the most popular option, followed by two-hour weekday evening classes. In addition to the other formats listed in the form, respondents suggested some other formats:

'A daily email telling me the meaning of one Gaelic word commonly found in place names (rivers, hills, etc.) on Ordnance Survey maps'

'Complete Immersion Course to gain fluency'

'Courses held over university holidays, or weekday classes that I could take for credit but would fit with my schedule in Biology'

'On WebCt every course has the option for "is this taught in Gaelic" but I haven't come across one yet that says it is... For the main university of the capitol [sic] of Scotland that's a bit disappointing don't you think?'

'online classes which might be informal, simply to increase knowledge'

'passive learning eg through use of gaelic [sic] on signage etc'

'Summer classes'

The non-assessed nature of learning in certain course formats was appreciated by some:

'[...] it's nice that there's no pressure, that there aren't exams and that you can go at your own pace (i.e. you could do two years of the beginners class if you didn't feel confident enough to progress etc)'

Time is a critical issue when deciding whether to take a language course. In particular, some concerns were expressed from respondents based outside the University's central area that courses may be most likely to be held away from their place of work or study, constraining their choices, especially in the case of lunchtime courses:

'I ticked "evening classes" above because I'm at KB, and I KNOW that any lunch classes would be at main campus, and there's no way I'm going there for lunch.'

'I am so busy with my work already, and cannot see myself making a commitment to learning Gaelic. While I approve of people learning minority languages or even any non-English language (I am fluent in a major European language and have studied a minority language in the past), the provision of Gaelic classes is not enough as I do not have the time. I suspect that most of my colleagues are in a similar position.'

The cost and availability of places on courses were other concerns raised, with some advocating free courses for certain categories of students or staff:

'Access to free classes for staff who need to use Gaelic in their work.'

'More Gaelic courses at a very competitive price. Gaelic courses in the university tend to be fully booked and prices are a bit high.'

'Offer courses in the language as a staff benefit.'

'Provide free Gaelic lessons for English, Welsh, Northern Irish and International student[s]. They are paying the highest fees.'

Figure 16: How would you describe your current interest in learning Gaelic?

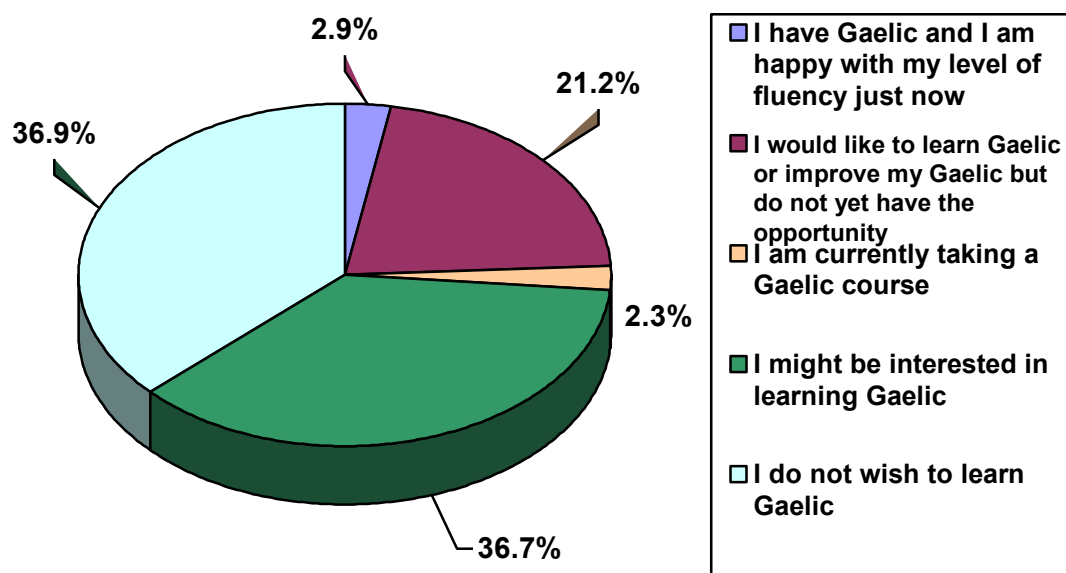


Figure 17: Percentage of respondents currently taking courses in Gaelic or who would like to/might be interested in learning Gaelic, grouped by national identity.
(Only nationalities with at least 10 respondents shown; excluding 'Other').

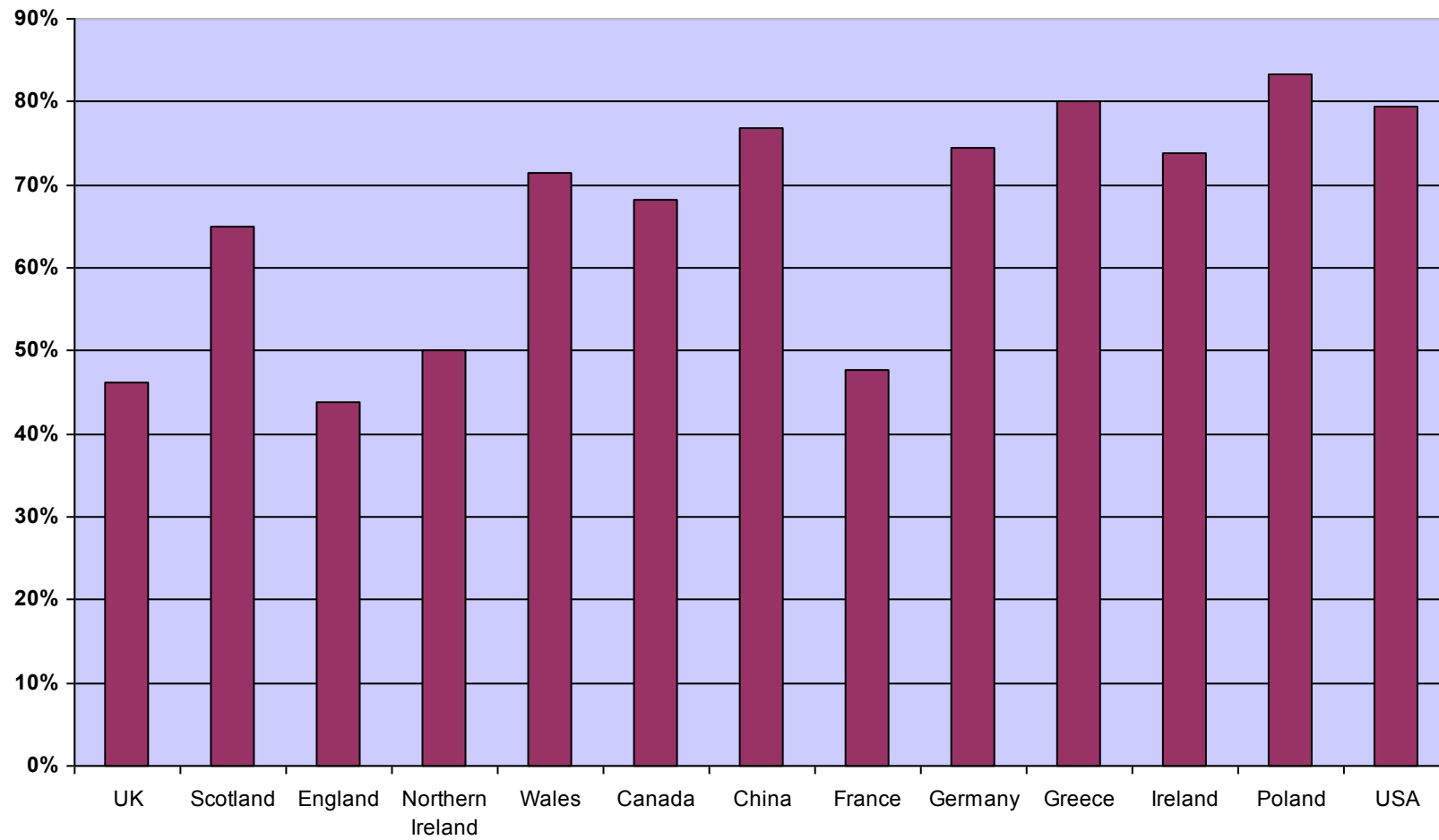


Figure 18: If you would be interested in taking Gaelic language classes, which level would you be interested in taking initially? (Optional question; showing only respondents who are currently taking a Gaelic course or who would like to/might be interested in learning Gaelic).

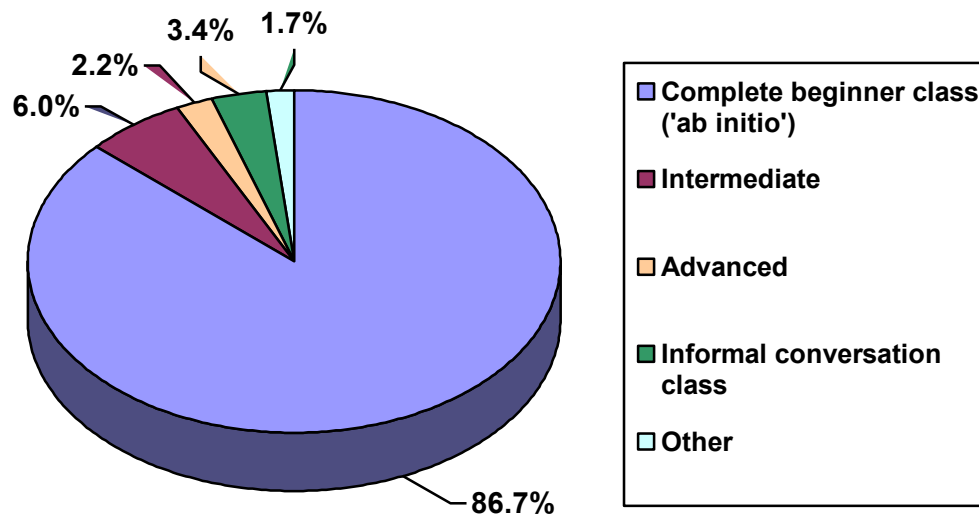
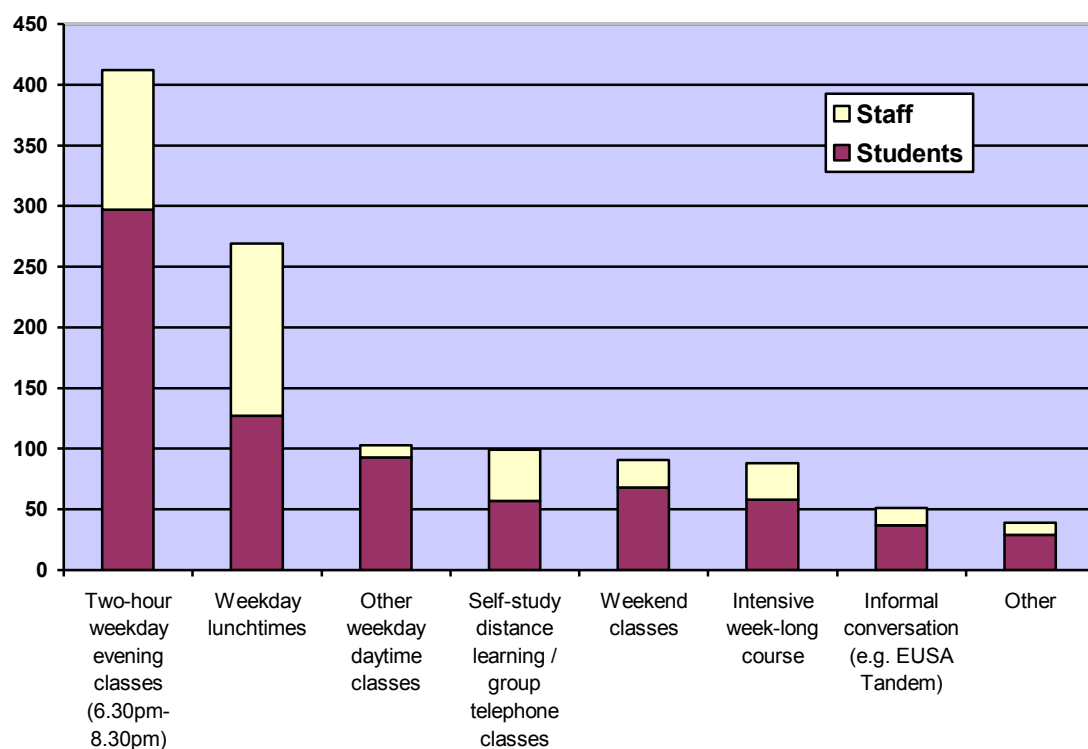


Figure 19: If you would like to learn more Gaelic, what kind of courses would be most appropriate for you? (Optional question).



7 Gaelic cultural events

7.1 Popular event ideas

The most popular cultural events suggested in the questionnaire were jointly cèilidhs and music concerts (see figure 20). These were followed by educational sessions about Gaelic folklore, information sessions on Gaelic history and culture and educational sessions about Gaelic place-names.

For students, cèilidhs were the most popular events, followed by music concerts. For staff, music concerts were most popular, followed jointly by educational sessions about Gaelic folklore, educational sessions about Gaelic place-names and information sessions on Gaelic history and culture.

It is important to note that the word *cèilidh* suggests different things in English usage and in Gaelic usage, as reflected in the comments in section 7.2 below.

7.2 Respondents' comments on event ideas

Comments were received from respondents about all of the events, a selection of which are given below:

Cèilidhs

'Ceilidhs are not Gaelic, regardless of the heritage of the word. Paparazzi does not invoke the image of Paparazzo, for example. And if you ruined a ceilidh by forcing Gaelic learning upon it, I would not be interested.'

'Good Scottish exercise, I approve. Also, I enjoy wearing a kilt and feeling proud of my country, plus this can all be achieved in a language that we actually speak.'

'I cannot believe that this is being seriously suggested as an activity appropriate for the University.'

'I come from a gaelic [sic] speaking part of the Highlands so know a bit about ceilidhs!'

'I don't think all Scottish Country Dancing is Gaelic. Especially not the ones with British military names.'

'to someone who is outside Gaelic culture, there is no way they even know what that means...'

'You don't need to learn Gaelic for this, do you? They have prospered in an English-speaking environment rather well! Even done in England!'

Music concerts

'The only programmes we watch on BBC Alba.'

'Was going to put higher, until I realised it would refer to some God awful folk music played by overly excited students and old men.'

Educational sessions about Gaelic folklore

'Excellent resources in School of Scottish Studies Archives'

'If they're delivered in Scots or English'

Information sessions on Gaelic history and culture

'So long as it's accurate and not romanticised [sic]'

Educational sessions about Gaelic place-names

'I don't have time to attend sessions, but a daily email with one word would be great.'

'I'd prefer static displays to sessions'

'More needs to be made of the nationally-important Scottish Place-Name Survey resource, badly neglected at present'

'Place names are extremely useful in my line of study!'

'This affects everyone so relevant to all'

'Useful for Blue Badge qualification'

Awareness sessions – short introductory sessions about Gaelic

'I am a distance learning student based in the Highlands, so short-duration events in Edinburgh are generally of no use to me – the event would have to be worth the travel time/cost'

'I don't feel I need them, but they may be a good thing in general'

'I've already learnt quite a lot about it in my Scottish studies class'

Talks about minority languages

'Especially the much ignored Scots.'

'I am interested in Welsh and Irish Gaelic as well'

'Yes, very interested, particularly in relation to other European minority languages'

Gaelic song workshops

'A Gaelic song class running on weekdays or weekends throughout the year would be amazing'

'I think songs would be easier to pick up as a beginner'

'This is what I really want to do as my aunt has died and can no longer ask her to help me'

Literary events

'If taught in English'

'Poetry'

'Translations required'

Conferences on Gaelic themes

'Assuming a conference was at least a whole day, or more.'

'Given the status of the University as the location of the oldest Celtic Chair in Scotland, and the excellent Gaelic collections in the University Library and School of Scottish Studies Archive, it's difficult to think of a more suitable venue for such conferences outside the Highlands.'

'If accessible in English'

Information sessions on Gaelic development and policy

'There remains a lot of ingrained prejudice against the language and its speakers among staff and students – I imagine that the university authorities believe that voicing such hate speech against any cultural or linguistic group of people is not an acceptable part of the public university milieu, so such information sessions are absolutely necessary, up to the highest levels of admin and the professoriate!'

Information sessions on Gaelic education

'I have a young daughter and we have made arrangements for her to attend the Gaelic nursery school and primary school'

Gaelic drama performances

'Would be more interested in these if I spoke the language'

'Would have to be subtitled'

Creative writing workshops

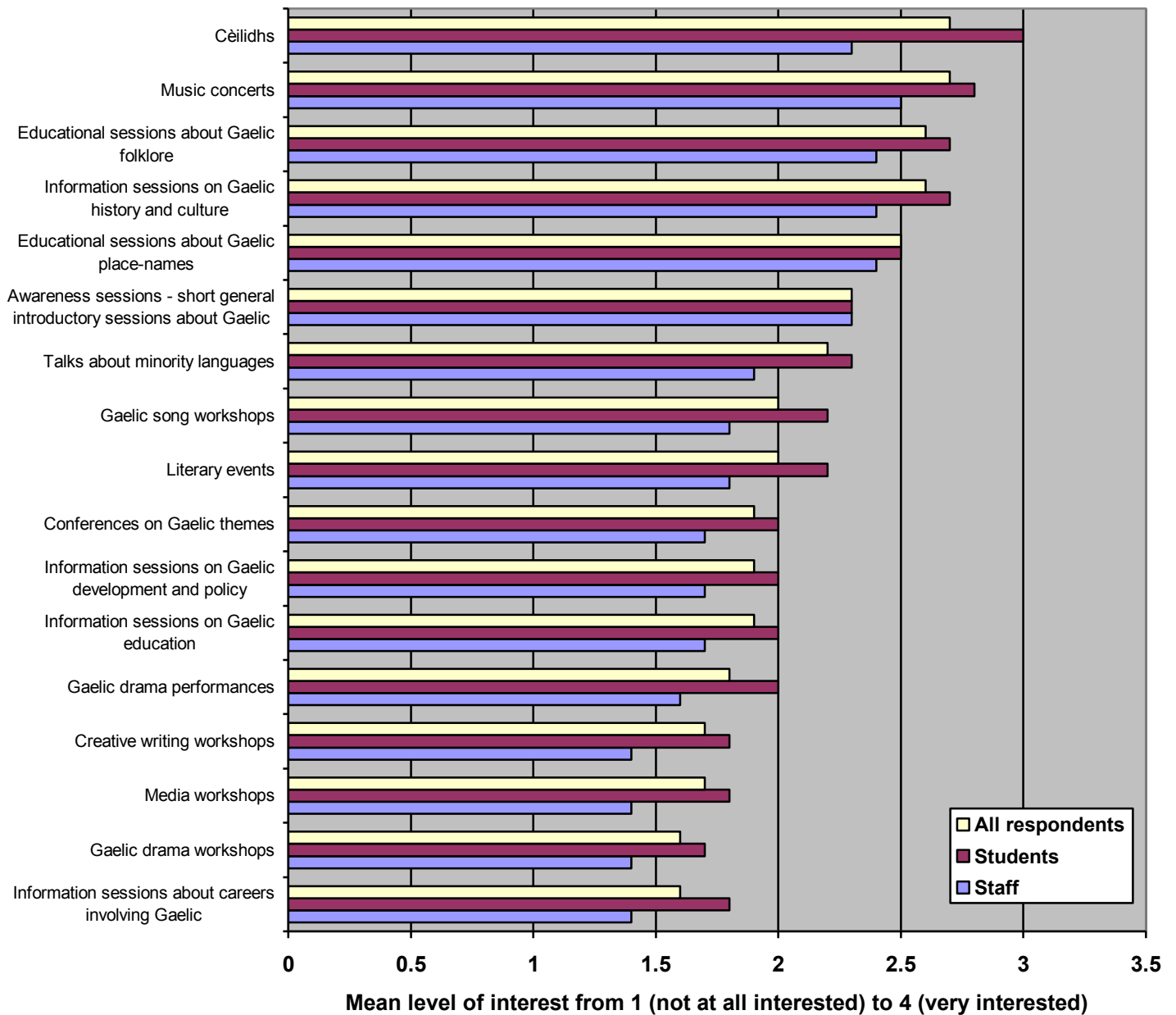
'Some excellent Gaelic poets and authors out there who are generally unknown to most British people and even Scots'

'This would require a high level of proficiency which I have no interest in acquiring.'

Information sessions about careers involving Gaelic

'There are tons of jobs in Gaelic media and mainlanders don't realise; this should be more widely known'

Figure 20: Respondents' ratings of interest in Gaelic cultural events.



8 Other initiatives

One question asked respondents which other initiatives they may be interested in the University pursuing to support and increase the status of Gaelic, apart from educational and cultural activities. A variety of potential initiatives were suggested in the question itself, and many others were provided by those who completed the questionnaire.

8.1 Increased visibility of Gaelic

The potential initiative that appears to be most favoured is 'increased visibility of Gaelic in public spaces (e.g. corporate/visual identity, signs, stationery)', with 933 respondents (50.4%) favouring this (see figure 21). Significantly, it received support from all those who answered the Gaelic-language version of the questionnaire. The other specific initiatives suggested also proved very popular with respondents to the Gaelic version of the survey, but increased visibility was the only one to achieve 100% support from that group.

Support for increased visibility of Gaelic on campus is strongest among students, with 640 student respondents (56.7%) selecting this option. Increased visibility of Gaelic in public spaces is especially popular in the School of Health in Social Science and the Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Medicine, with 75.0% of students in these two Schools (9 and 27 respondents respectively) reacting favourably to this suggestion, although the samples in those Schools were relatively small. In Schools with larger samples, very high levels of support for increased public visibility of Gaelic were also found in Edinburgh College of Art (31 students with this preference; 72.1%), the School of Literatures, Languages and Cultures (132 students; 66.7%), the School of Philosophy, Psychology and Language Sciences (56 students; 63.6%) and Moray House School of Education (32 students; 62.7%) (see figure 22).

Among the student body as a whole, this initiative would appear to be slightly more popular among postgraduate students, with 119 (57.5%) of the research postgraduates and 88 (58.7%) of the taught postgraduates expressing a preference for increased visibility of Gaelic in this way.

Some respondents commented on the value of language visibility or made further suggestions, for instance:

'Have signs in both Gaelic and English, that's the easiest and non intrusive way to learn (btw it would be nice if Gaelic words were accompanied with IPA pronunciation notes), have stationary displays explaining place names in Gaelic, how to read (pronounce them and what they mean).'

'Increasing the general visibility in public spaces around the university is important. I loved going to Irish language-friendly cafes and restaurants around Trinity in Dublin. Having certain time slots in already established socializing areas in university where they are Gaelic-friendly, or creating new ones, would be great. A few translations on the walls around Potterow [sic], and some staff using basic greetings etc. would be brilliant.'

'It is difficult to promote Gaelic signage and published materials without it looking a little "faked", given that Edinburgh was not really ever a strongly Gaelic-speaking area, but on the other hand these are probably some of the few ways to help promote the language locally, as it would be unrealistic to expect there to be many bi/multi-lingual staff to provide a proper Gaelic-friendly environment on campus for Gaelic-speakers (best left to the likes of Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, perhaps). At least the rest of us would probably learn some new Gaelic words and phrases from signage, etc, which would count as a positive step.'

'My dream is for the main library's sign to be [in] both languages and for people to stop and know that Gaelic is infact [sic] used in this uni. I came and didn't know that Gaelic could be studied and it was by chance that I am now doing it [...]. How many have slipped through the nets?'

8.1.1 Creating 'Gaelic-friendly' spaces

Language visibility could be a way of making spaces at the University more 'Gaelic-friendly'. When asked if there are any spaces that feel 'Gaelic-friendly', respondents typically mentioned places where there is existing bilingual signage, such as 27 George Square and outside Mylne's Court.

'The Celtic and Scottish Studies building has bilingual signs (and posters), books in and about Gaelic, and Gaelic-speaking staff.'

Other commended spaces included New College, the Scottish History library, the Catholic Chaplaincy at 23 George Square, the Centre for Research Collections and the Main Library 'as a multicultural area in general'.

'The Carmichael Watson Project in Special Collections [the Centre for Research Collections] has become a Gaelic-friendly area with colleagues often commenting on how good it is to hear Gaelic being used very naturally within the team. The School of Scottish Studies is Gaelic-friendly but seems to operate as a bit of a closed-shop.'

'I think the student unions could become incredibly [Gaelic-friendly] (maybe not necessarily reached their full potential yet). The University is so old and has just a great history that all its oldest and most beautiful buildings already create a wonderfully Gaelic atmosphere that could be played on.'

When asked if there are any spaces at the University where it might be uncomfortable for staff, students or visitors to use Gaelic, a great number of respondents replied that no such spaces exist:

'No, you should be able to speak whatever language you want. This seems to be the case.'

Meanwhile, some suggested that the use of Gaelic could make non-Gaelic-speakers uncomfortable. The practicalities and ethical dimension of language policy in Medicine was explained in one reply to the questionnaire:

'In the medical school, we require the working language to be English in front of patients and relatives, UNLESS the change is to move to the language of those people. i.e. it would be unacceptable for medical staff and students to speak Gaelic in front of only anglophone patients. This is simply a professional issue so that people do not think that they are being excluded from a medical discussion about them.'

Other respondents claimed on the contrary that individuals would feel uncomfortable using Gaelic everywhere at the University, or that there are few areas in the University that actively encourage the use of Gaelic:

'I'm not aware of anywhere on campus which encourages Gaelic to be spoken at all.'

When specific spaces were cited as difficult spaces to use Gaelic, these were frequently administrative or service-related spaces, but also learning spaces and computing facilities. The following comments provide examples:

'EUSA (no Gaidhlig speakers and lacking enthusiasm). The library has few services in Gaidhlig. Support services do not offer support in Gaidhlig.'

'Every learning situation outside of the departments teaching Gaelic'

'Few reception areas come across as Gaelic-friendly.'

'General use PCs don't have Gaelic keyboard installed by default... and you can't install it without admin rights (I think) This means you have to use the "Insert Symbol" thing, which is really annoying!'

'I would imagine that any service based activity, from the Registry Office to the information/help desks at the library would prove problematic as staff will not be able to understand Gaelic.'

'there are no spaces where Gaelic can be used to get services. eg library, chaplancy [sic], medical centre, student centre, student reps etc'

8.2 Other popular initiatives from the listed suggestions

Among the population as a whole, the second most popular initiative after increased visibility was scholarships for Gaelic studies, favoured by 736 respondents (39.7%).

With student respondents specifically, the second most popular initiative was 'greater visibility on official University products and merchandise (e.g. mugs, pens, clothing)', with 475 student respondents (42.1%) favouring this. Students were generally more supportive of the suggested initiatives than the staff group of respondents were.

The other listed potential initiatives, in decreasing order of reported interest (see figure 21), were a higher profile for Gaelic on University websites and in emails, the appointment of a Gaelic Development Officer, the creation of Gaelic podcasts or other electronic media, a greater use of Gaelic in teaching, learning and research, the availability of more official University publications in Gaelic, and opportunities for the use of Gaelic in student residences. The following were among comments received regarding these suggestions:

'All of these are essential. The university should increase awareness tenfold. Although it does more than some, there is a great opportunity for Gaidhlig [sic] through the help of the University'

'A Gaelic Development Officer would be excellent for the University. Glasgow University are making great strides by having a GDO and Aberdeen University look set to do the same thing. The post would surely strengthen what has become a trailing Gaelic/Celtic Department and would encourage [sic] use of the language in everyday ways not just to those studying the language or literature. There are Gaels, leth-Gaels and learning Gaels across the University in different roles with different interests. It would help Gaelic to affirm its status as a modern language.'

'As a student of Celtic, one of the big things for us is the fact that every other Uni has a Gaelic officer and we feel rather left out. Also, Glasgow uni have a Gaelic flat which we too would love to have in Edinburgh. [...]'

'[...] If there were to be a "development manager" to give classes in Gaelic, it would be beneficial if they could help develop drama scripts and increase confidence in the quality of Gaelic spoken.'

'Opportunities for greater use of Gaelic in student residences, seems particularly important. It would bring Gaelic speakers (students) together and create a community that will last through university and friendships that can last further than that.'

'Perhaps on the electronic media side of it, someone from the technology departments of the University could work with someone from the Gaelic Department to perhaps create an app, for iPhone, Android etc, with some kind of "teach yourself basic Gaelic" facility. QR codes could be put up on stickers throughout the campus, inviting people to different Gaelic events [...].'

[Regarding the lack of a Gaelic Development Officer]: '[...] Tha sinne, mar oileanaich, uaireannan, a' faireachdainn mar lach gun loch! [...]' [As students, we often feel like a duck without a loch!]

'This all sounds brilliant, I would love to see a dramatic increase in Gaelic in Scotland and think that it's great that the University is taking such an active role in promoting it. [...]'

8.3 Respondents' own proposals

A significant number of respondents would like to see initiatives to support and promote the Scots language, or believe that the promotion of the Scots language is more relevant than Gaelic in Edinburgh. The following comments are representative of how positive steps for Gaelic could usefully be accompanied by initiatives for the Scots language:

'A lot of what you suggest in this list would be tokenism. How about an increased use of Scots? Can we have a Scots development officer?'

'Any of these but only if a similar promotion is given to Scots as well'

'I would support most of the above for both Scots and Gaelic together. I would not be happy to see the above for Gaelic without Scots, since Scots is more widely used in Edinburgh and yet lacks status to the extent that people don't even know when they are speaking it.'

Aside from Scots, many comments made about other languages could also point towards the potential of increasing promotion of Gaelic as part of promoting linguistic diversity in the University more generally:

'[...] I would rather see Urdu or Mandarin promoted in the University – there are comparable if not more numbers of people in Scotland who speak these languages, and certainly more people in the world.'

Many other proposals were put forward by respondents, such as the following (with key suggestions not previously mentioned underlined):

'A Gaelic week where everyone is encourage to speak as much Gaelic as they can even if it is just a simple greeting, maybe have people on campus teaching students words and phrases'

'Appoint Gaelic speakers to staff, hold recruiting drives in Highlands [...]'

'as a member of eca, and newly merged with the university, it is not always easy to know everything that is going on in the university, and where links might be made. I'm sure most of the art school are unaware of the school of celtic and scottish studies [sic] for example and the archives there. I wonder what is the best way to introduce students to these archives and research possibilities / collaborations?'

'Authorizing a full professor and more staff and resources for Celtic and Scottish Studies'

*'Barrachd taic dha Gaidheil nach eil ag ionnsachadh Gaidhlig san oilthigh.'
[More support for Gaelic speakers who are not studying Gaelic at the University]*

'Being able to use Gaelic for exams, as I have heard in Wales, Welsh is an option for exams as well as English.'

'Chancellor's Fellowships for Gaelic and minority language studies.'

'Computers with Gaelic language packs installed for those who wish them.'

*'Consider supporting the formation of a Gaelic choir for staff and students
(for Gaelic and non-Gaelic speakers).'*

*'Dè mu dheidhinn gym classes le oide Gàidhlig? Bu chaomh leam sin.'
[What about gym classes with a Gaelic instructor? I'd like to see that.]*

*'Don't move Celtic and Scottish Studies. The only place where it is
currently ever heard spoken on campus will be swallowed up in a huge
monolithic shared LLC building!'*

*'Encourage native speakers of all backgrounds to come to the University to
study. That is, I'd suggest to make it an integral part of your wider access
to learning strategy, and ensure that people living in the Western Isles (and
other parts where Gaelic is spoken), and not just the privileged few, have
access to the University. Obviously this is a wider, national issue too!'*

*'[...] Encourage people to see Gaelic as something that progresses with new
technologies, and that learning Gaelic doesn't have to mean reading long
300-year-old books and verb tables. Of course, that comes later.'*

*'Ensure that senior officers of the University use Gaelic in public
announcements and have a capacity to do so. Allow time release for staff to
undertake Gaelic language training. Consider looking at the way
universities in other countries concerned with protecting threatened
indigenous languages have addressed the issues. Possibly think about
finding some money to bring Canadians over to talk about their expertise in
this area.'*

*'Establish a programme which would facilitate students spending time in
Gaelic speaking areas in order to increase their ability in the language.'*

*'Establish a student exchange program with Sabhal Mor Ostaig [sic] in
Skye. Edinburgh students would benefit from Gaelic immersion, and SMO
students would benefit from research orientation & resources here. I have
studied in both places and find that they complement each other very well.
This might also attract SMO students here as PG's.'*

*'events that connect Gaelic with welsh and irish and to older related
language [sic] e.g. that underpin pictish placenames – these could give
more relevance to the language if people could see it was still alive in their
local area names.'*

*'Folk music and folk culture – including Gaelic and Scots – should be
supported through collaboration with the Story-telling Centre, the Scots
Music Group associated with the Adult Learning Project'*

'Gaelic medium childcare facility'

'Gaelic opportunities targeted at children in Gaelic Medium Education to forge a link between school and Higher Education.'

'Gaelic versions of email auto signatures: I have seen these used in Welsh and Irish institutions.'

'Given the fact that Gaelic is virtually invisible in the University at the moment there is any amount of small things the university could do to improve things. The tag-line used at the bottom of staff/student emails for instance, could be bilingual. That's just one example of something cost-free which the university could do and hasn't!'

'Graduations could be an opportunity to include some Gaelic. Even a welcome or a few words in any speech or signage would help promote the language to an international audience. Does Gaelic feature on the degree?'

'greater accessibility; positive discrimination in favour of Highers sat in Gaelic like in Canadian French medium schools especially for non native speakers. compulsory term module of Gaelic to graduate.'

'Greater promotion of the shinty clubs in the university. I don't think international students of very aware of this gaelic [sic] sport. It may spike the interest of some of the international students and provide an initial interest and acknowledgement of gaelic culture, which can in turn be used to promote the culture and in turn the gaelic language.'

'Greater use of the many inspirational and highly important Gaelic poets and authors. People like Sorley Maclean & Iain Crichton Smith are just as important to Scottish literature and poetry as Hugh MacDiarmid or Norman McCaig and deserve more consideration when talking about Scotland. Perhaps the university could play a role here somehow – I don't know if Gaelic literature is taught in Scottish Literature classes but it should be!'

'Have a gaelic week – with hebridean/highland [sic] food stands, music sessions, and posters above the library with 'Welcome' signs. Also use the library screens to display basic gaelic expressions! (okay sounds a bit too much maybe!). I think generally having more gaelic signs, and sheets on basic gaelic given to students would be a good idea.'

'Have some self-study materials available for staffs/students and deliver them in a obvious way. ex: Myed [sic] portal'

'How about a traditional Gaelic blessing to close each graduation ceremony?'

'[...] I do think we have to be mindful of all non-English-as-a-first-language speakers in the University and offer some form of support/translation service – maybe we do already and if so then Gaelic should be added to it.'

'I have just started working at the university but I was a student at [an Irish university] where the implementation of an Irish Language Scheme has gone from strength to strength. I worked as the Irish Language Officer for a short term [...] and during that time I gained a great insight into the progress of Irish at [that university]. I initially was on the Irish Language Committee as a student rep and more recently used to teach the evening classes and summer courses. Some suggestions would be: staff coffee morning, day and evening classes, bilingual website, weekend trips, guest lectures, Gaelic language student accommodation, Gaelic society, a part-time diploma, conversation circle, reading group, online community...'

'I have to say that one reason Gaelic is not strong in Edinburgh University is that many students from the Highlands tend to go to Glasgow or Aberdeen as they are perceived as being more "friendly". More outreach to such areas to improve the image of the uni there would be helpful – I was one of only 2 or 3 students from my highschool [sic] year who chose to come to Edinburgh University!'

'Incorporate Gaelic in graduation ceremony and certificates, and make Gaelic certificates available for alumni to purchase.'

'Incorporating [sic] the language into annual events such as graduations, carol concerts etc.'

'Increase recruiting of students from the Gaidhealtachd [sic] into all university areas of study, and support their use of their native language in their lives here [...]'

'Increase the number of Gaelic teachers. Currently, there is one excellent Gaelic teacher, Ann Paterson, however it would be great to have more teachers so that after Gaelic 2 [in the Languages for All programme offered by the Office of Lifelong Learning] is completed students can go on and continue their learning. For so many students, they complete the two year Language for All courses but have nowhere to develop their Gaelic thereafter.'

'Integrate Gaelic studies strands of the different schools and departments; at present I'm doing research on Gaelic in Linguistics and English Language, but links with the Celtic studies section are more or less invisible. Joining these up would be a good way of getting people who are enthusiastic about language interested in Gaelic.'

'Introduce a mandatory Gaelic component to Induction Week for staff (well, first make an Induction Week for staff) and students.'

'Just be aware that Gaelic-related holdings are among the research materials in the University of international importance – some are being made use of, but others, such as the Place-Name Survey, are badly neglected. Last summer alone I brought in nearly £350K in outside grants to my university employers as a result of Gaelic-based applications. I find it

difficult to believe that the university isn't making more of such opportunities by promoting and encouraging Celtic studies.'

'Little stories half in English half in Gaelic for people to be able to pick it up alongside their studies'

'Make sure promoting our [sic] Gaelic cultural heritage is specifically cited in forthcoming Strategic Plan!'

'More direct involvement with the primary and secondary education sectors, especially with the Gaelic medium school at Tollcross, Edinburgh'

'My university sports club sings a Gaelic song at the end of matches – most of us don't know the words properly, but it's a cool "chant" and it's nice that it shows part of our culture (particularly when we play against English teams). Maybe a project could be to work with all EUSU sports team to develop Gaelic chants / translate their current chants into Gaelic. We currently sing in Gaelic for the first verse and then in English for the second and I believe the meaning of the two verses is the same, so if other sports clubs wanted to do the same then they could just be adding to their current chant.'

'Offer a Gaelic option within the BEd primary – you can focus on other languages but not Gaelic!'

'Offer PhD scholarships in any subject for Gaelic-speakers.'

'Perhaps increased support/funding for the Highland Society from central sources.'

'Principal welcoming graduands in Gaelic [...]. Use of Gaelic in welcome in home run conferences / welcome of podcasts. [...]'

'[...] Produce maps/support documents in Gàidhlig [sic]'

'Promote beginner classes to international students, make it possible (and inexpensive) to learn Gaelic just out of interest. Many PhD students have varied interests and would be interested in learning.'

'Promote it alongside the Irish language as for a University that takes in a lot of Irish and Northern Irish students each year, many of whom will have experience in this, then to combine approaches to the two very similar languages would be a great idea.'

'Properly fund and support the School of Scottish Studies Archives. A national treasure-trove of Gaelic songs, stories and history that is being left to rot due to lack of funding by the School of Literatures, Languages and Cultures.'

'Seòmar coitcheann air choireigin (àrainneachd mì-fhòirmeil na Gàidhlig). Tha oileanaich ann aig nach eil fios mu dhèidhinn na tha dol an-lùib a'

Chomainn Cheiltich 's a leithid. Feumaidh dòigh a bhith ann luchd-labhairt uile a chruinneachadh còmhla.' [Some kind of common room (an informal Gaelic environment). Some students don't know about what's happening with the Highland Society and so on. There should be a way to bring all Gaelic speakers together.]

'Stage competitions for members of university outdoor sports societies to see who has the best understanding of the names on the OS maps that they use.'

'Suggest introducing international students too [sic] it. This might be as simple as using one or two phrases in a welcome email or in any literature they get when they start. This would not be so much in the hopes that they actually learn it, but in the hope that they realise it actually exists. The amount of people from outside the UK (actually, outside Scotland, Wales or Ireland) that think Gaelic is just how Scottish people pronounce English in phenomenal.'

'The films we make at ECA & the Screen Academy should be subtitled in Gaelic'

'[...] Uni catering could have menus in Gaelic & English (that would help increase people's vocab too :-) Wherever there's an accessible sign, e.g. in Braille, also make it in Gaelic. Is there a University radio station? What about "Gaelic hour". Is there a University Gaelic society? (that allows staff membership) Does the University promote any of the Gaelic activities going on in Edinburgh? (there are loads!).'

'What comes to mind is booklets or leaflets (i.e. about University's history and involvement with Gaelic culture) made in both English and Gaelic (in one document) as to increase the awareness [sic] and interest in those who don't speak any Gaelic at all.'

Figure 21: In addition to educational and cultural activities, are there other specific initiatives in which you would like to see the University engage in order to support and increase the use of Gaelic? (Responses in multiple categories accepted).

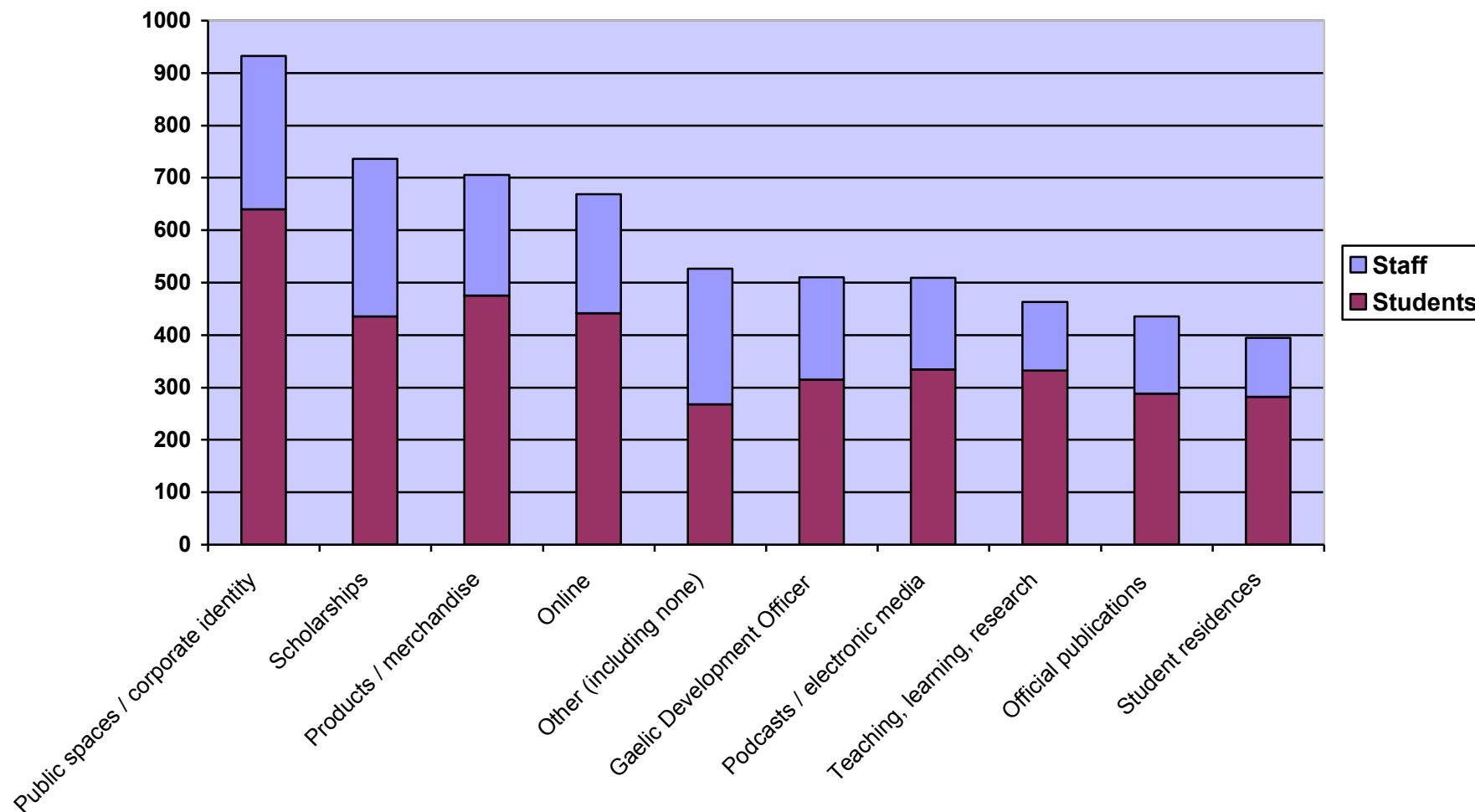
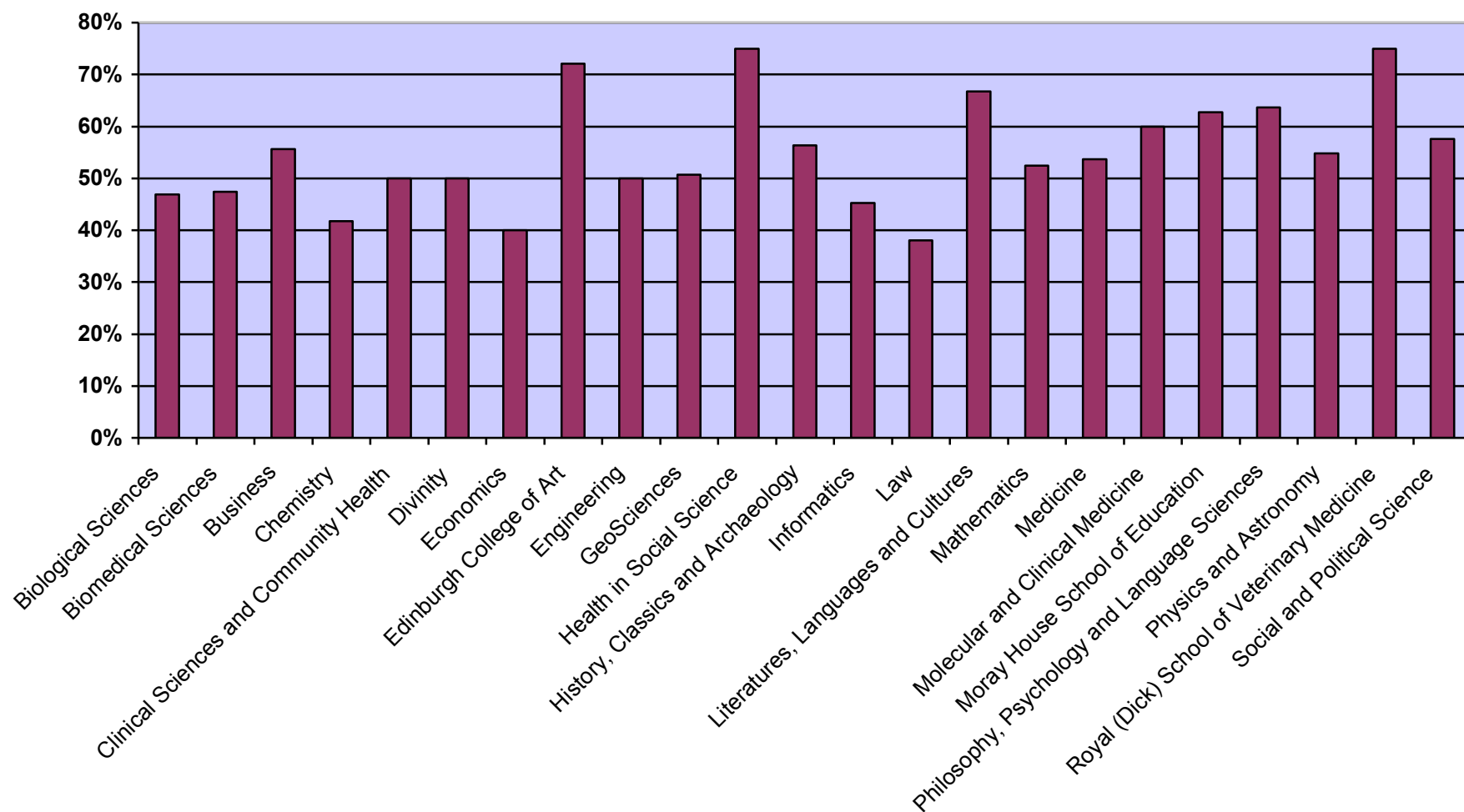


Figure 22: Support for increased visibility of Gaelic in public spaces (e.g. corporate/visual identity, signs, stationery), by School. (Student respondents only).



9 Negative and indifferent attitudes in context

The question regarding other initiatives to support and increase the use of Gaelic (as covered in section 8 above) was intentionally a required question, in order to gauge interest in other projects the University may consider pursuing as part of its Gaelic Language Plan. Among the 527 individuals who selected the response 'Other', a number did so in order to express a negative or indifferent attitude towards the suggested initiatives, as has been recorded on figure 21. Representative examples of these sentiments are given below:

'Having done my undergraduate at a Welsh university where everything was bilingual but everyone spoke English anyway, I think this is a waste of money.'

'I am really unsure of the value that Gaelic would add to the community. Part of me says that it is a very Scottish thing and should be more prominent but part of me thinks that it is irrelevant in 21st century Scotland and adds no value in modern society.'

'I do not see this as a priority and would be unhappy for a great deal of time, money and effort to be put into such developments at a time of such economic uncertainty and austerity.'

'I don't really mind what initiatives the university runs.'

'I don't think Gaelic has any place in this university'

'I think the University should use its academic freedom to campaign against the imposition of this language by the Scottish Government, by Bord na Gàidhlig [sic], by Highland council [sic] and by other power-crazy organisations'

'[...] this promotion of gaelic [sic] using public resources is nothing short of politically motivated cultural engineering. It is an utter disgrace that the University is having anything to do with this whatsoever.'

'[...] I was unaware that The University of Edinburgh had any history with gaelic [sic] that would make [this] appropriate, apart from teaching the subject.'

'I would be made very upset by the wasting of money on any such initiatives. Might I recommend taking the budget for this project out of the bank (in £50 notes) and setting it on fire in the middle of George Square? This will bring the same benefits (NONE) whilst wasting less time, so that people can get back to the drawing board on new ideas such [sic] making the university more welcoming to gold-fish enthusiasts.'

'I would like this initiative stopped. It's alienating, divisive, costly, bureaucratic, and is based on a notion of Scottish identity that is both reactionary and false. I speak several languages and have minority language

ancestry (welsh [sic]). I find this initiative deeply alienating [sic] on a personal level. As a senior academic with major management roles, I would feel uncomfortable enacting any of these policies.'

'I would like to see the university eradicate the language.'

'No, I see no benefit to offering to increase the use of Gaelic within the wider University. It is just creating a rod for us to be beaten with when we can't provide a service in Gaelic on demand.'

'No, this would be pointless or at best "twee" outside the context of formal teaching [...] of the language or closely related activities around societies [sic] etc. Apologies [sic] if all my responses are overtly negative but happy at least to defend my views and participate in follow up research or discussion.'

'Not clear why, within a multicultural environment such as the University epitomises, one would wish to apply special privileges to one particular language with diminishing contemporary relevance.'

'Speaking Gaelic in public spaces should be banned! It's a dreadful language, and I'm appalled that you are supporting it!'

'[...] There is NO initiative I would like to see the University engage in to support use of Gaelic.'

'What are you thinking of cancelling in order to pander to the Gaelic lobby? These things cost money.'

Many of these negative attitudes are based on perceptions of Gaelic as less relevant to Edinburgh than to other parts of Scotland, and on the belief held by some that the increased promotion of Gaelic would necessarily be at the expense of other University activities or at the expense of teaching or research provision. As previously mentioned in section 4.1 above, many of the negative comments expressed in these survey responses also appear to stem from a lack of awareness about the policy context in which Gaelic Language Plans are being prepared, and of the fact that Gaelic Language Plans are being developed by a number of higher education institutions in Scotland, not only by the University of Edinburgh. In fact, some respondents highlighted the importance of the University of Edinburgh not falling behind other Scottish universities in its treatment of Gaelic, as explained in this comment:

'I have had colleagues in other Scottish universities, especially Glasgow, openly mocking and sniggering at the clumsy, cack-handed behaviour and lack of political savvy of the UoE administration in its attitude towards Gaelic: doing everything in its power to avoid implementing a Gaelic plan, planning to downgrade the School of Scottish Studies to an anonymous corridor in a 60s office block, and leaving the once prestigious Celtic Chair vacant for years. Whatever political parties will be in power in Holyrood over the coming decades, there is no doubt but that there will be increasing encouragement/pressure from the government on educational institutions at all levels to foster Scottish studies in all their varieties. I'm not just offended about the university administration's attitude towards Gaelic as a

Gael – what really gets me as an salaried employee is the extraordinary lack of nous displayed in stubbornly, even impudently, refusing to promote a subject which could be such an attractive asset to the university's international scholarly reputation, and its domestic status. What's worse is that other, more astute, universities such as Glasgow and Aberdeen are racing ahead!'

By joining other Scottish universities in developing a Gaelic Language Plan and promoting its linguistic diversity, the University of Edinburgh would make a significant commitment in the spirit of its own aims, which recognise that:

‘As a great civic university, Edinburgh especially values its intellectual and economic relationship with the Scottish community that forms its base and provides the foundation from which it will continue to look to the widest international horizons, enriching both itself and Scotland.’ (University of Edinburgh Mission and Governance 2012)

As such, the University's support and promotion of Gaelic has the potential to make a positive contribution to the University's mission of creating, disseminating and curating knowledge and to enhance its existing profile as a world-leading centre of academic excellence.

10 Response to questionnaire through online social media

10.1 Facebook

On 16 March 2012, the University of Edinburgh shared a link to the Staff News article about the Gaelic Language Plan questionnaire on its Facebook page, with the text:

‘Does Gaelic language have a sufficient profile in the University?
Whether you’re a fluent speaker, a learner or unable to read a word,
complete our short questionnaire today to help us support the use of
Gaelic at Edinburgh.’

This link generated a considerable debate, with 46 comments posted between 16 March and 5 April, making it the single most commented post on the University’s Facebook page since it was opened in May 2010. The discussion can be viewed at this link:
<<https://www.facebook.com/UniversityOfEdinburgh/posts/185213024927627>>.

10.2 Twitter

The official University of Edinburgh Twitter account @UniofEdinburgh posted three tweets in English announcing the Gaelic Language plan questionnaire and providing reminders to respond towards the end of the study period.

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